Standoff Land-Attack Missile - Expanded Response (SLAM-ER)

The Standoff Land-Attack Missile - Expanded Response (SLAM-ER) is a precision tactical weapon deployed that is intended to provide Joint Force and Carrier Battle Group Commanders with a standoff precision strike capability launched from carrier battle group aircraft. An advanced derivative of its predecessor (SLAM), the SLAM-ER is intended to have: longer range, reduced susceptibility to countermeasures, increased probability of kill against hardened targets, and improved guidance with an integrated Global Positioning System and Inertial Navigation System. Improved user interfaces for mission planning and an automated target acquisition (ATA) capability to aid the pilot in finding and killing targets are being retrofitted to both SLAM and SLAM-ER.

SLAM-ER seeks to provide incremental improvements in range and penetrating lethality. Terminal guidance to the target relies heavily on a man-in-the-loop (MITL) mode. ATA is designed to provide a pilot with an additional target cue in cluttered scenes, marginal weather, and countermeasures environments. This is accomplished by employing scene-matching technology (hardware and software modifications). The ATA could be used in a stand alone mode when MITL is not feasible or desirable. SLAM-ER uses a newly developed titanium-cased warhead to achieve greater hard target penetration and lethality.

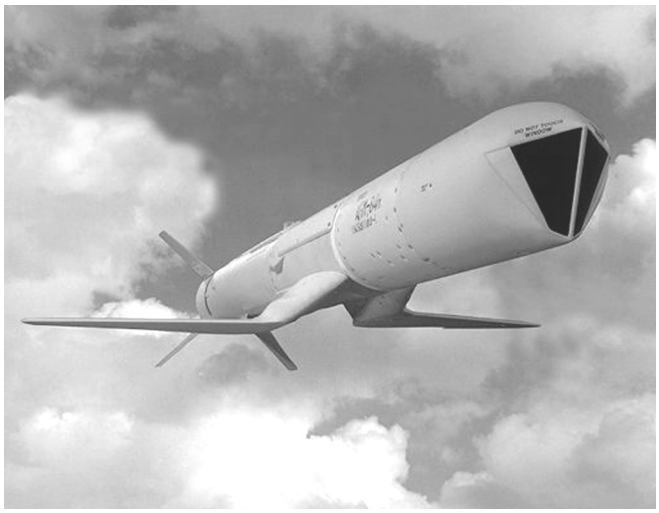
SLAM-ER entered Engineering and Manufacturing Development after a Milestone IV/II decision in FY95. The Navy decided to procure the FY96 buy of SLAM in the SLAM-ER configuration avoiding future retrofit costs. The Low-Rate Initial Production (LRIP) I decision was made in April 1997, with LRIP II decision in April 1998. Operational Evaluation (OPEVAL) was conducted from August 1998 to May 1999. As detailed in the 1999 Annual Report to Congress, DOT&E assessed SLAM-ER to be not operationally effective and not operationally suitable as tested in OPEVAL. An LRIP III decision was made in August 1999. These three production decisions totaled over 100 missiles. The program corrected deficiencies and a Verification of Correction of Deficiencies Phase examined all corrected deficiencies to ensure the fleet had an operationally effective and suitable system upon introduction. Milestone III and the full-rate production decisions were approved in May 2000.

TEST & EVALUATION ACTIVITY

Follow-on Test and Evaluation (Operational Test-IIIA) began in September 2001 to evaluate the ATA capability. The test plan incorporated one developmental test flight, three developmental/operational test flights, and one operational test flight. Initial testing included several captive carry flights of the missile with positive assessments by the operational test pilot. Initial developmental tests suffered from missile system failures not related to ATA: first a hang fire and then failure of the missile wings to deploy after launch. These failures were followed by five effective tests.

TEST & EVALUATION ASSESSMENT

DOT&E approved the test plan and monitored the final operational test flight and found the missile with ATA to be operationally effective and operationally suitable. The missile flew an extended attack profile



While Standoff Land-Attack Missile - Expanded Response with automated target acquisition does not yet provide a reliable "launch and leave" capability, it does provide cueing that can increase a pilot's confidence that the missile will hit the target.

against a simulated aircraft hangar. ATA provided the pilot with cueing to the target. The pilot used this cueing to guide the missile to the desired impact point on the target.

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